

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9291

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL ASMARA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 6222

EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC, PINS, ET, PINT

SUBJ: JOINT MEETING WITH FONMIN: TENNECO SEVEN

REFS: ADDIS 5533, 6158, 5576, ASMARA 368

1. I JOINED CANADIAN AMBASSADOR REYNOLDS AND UNDP'S RESREP STEDMAN BY PREARRANGEMENT IN CALL ON FONMIN ZEWDE AT REYNOLD'S INITIATIVE AFTERNOON JUNE 2. POL COUNSELOR ACCOMPANIED ME. SESSION LASTED OVER TWO HOURS AND WAS CORDIAL. MUCH OF TIME TAKEN UP WITH REVIEW DEVELOPMENTS IN SAGA OF TENNECO SEVEN.

2. AMBASSADOR REYNOLDS OPENED WITH EXPRESSION DISAPPOINTMENT IN TREND OF EVENTS BEGINNING WITH GHINDA TRAGEDY WHICH, DESPITE TENNECO'S BEST EFFORTS, HAD NOW LED TO LOSS OF LIFE, IMPRISONMENT OF ANOTHER CANADIAN CITIZEN AND CAPTURE OF A CANWEST HELO. ELF'S CONTINUING DETENTION OF SEVEN PEOPLE GETTING INCREASING PUBLICITY IN CANADA AND ELSEWHERE. AS RESULT, GOC COMING UNDER RISING PRESSURE AND IS BEING ASKED WHAT ITS DOING TO EFFECT THEIR RELEASE. ALTHOUGH HE (REYNOLDS) WITHOUT INSTRUCTIONS, HE DID WISH SAY ON PERSONAL BASIS THAT IT HAD BEEN HIS VIEW FOR SOME TIME IEG WOULD HAVE TO GET MORE DEEPLY AND MORE DIRECTLY INVOLVED TO OBTAIN EXPEDITIOUS RELEASE OF CAPTIVES. HE HAD ASKED CONFIDENTIAL

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FOR THIS MEETING WITH FONMIN TO EXPRESS THIS VIEW BECAUSE

HE ANTICIPATED RECEIVING INSTRUCTIONS TO DO SO FROM HIS GOVERNMENT SHORTLY BUT KNEW THAT FONMIN WOULD HAVE TO BE AWAY ATTENDING OAU SUMMIT IN MOGADISCIO FOR NEXT SEVERAL DAYS.

3. FONMIN SAID HE WAS PLANNING LEAVE FOR MOGADISCIO JUNE 4. HE WOULD BE BACK BRIEFLY IN ADDIS TO HOST GENERAL GOWON FOLLOWING WEEKEND AND WOULD RETURN TO MOGADISCIO THEREAFTER.

4. THERE FOLLOWED LENGTHY DISCUSSION OF PROS AND CONS OF MORE DIRECT IEG INVOLVEMENT, ESSENTIALLY BETWEEN CANADIAN AMBASSADOR AND FONMIN, DURING WHICH LATTER MADE FOLLOWING POINTS:

(A) IEG HAD NO PARTICULAR PROBLEMS WITH ELF SEVEN-POINT DEMAND FORWARDED THROUGH AL MORGHANI (CF. ADDIS 5533).

(B) NOTEWORTHY, HOWEVER, THAT THESE SEVEN DEMANDS ONLY PRECURSORS TO NEGOTIATION, DURING WHICH HE WOULD EXPECT ELF USE OPPORTUNITY TO SEEK EXTRACT MAJOR CONCESSIONS FROM IEG.

(C) AS CONSEQUENCE, IEG HAD BEEN PLEASED AGREE TENNECO'S DESIRE CARRY BALL SO LONG AS THIS SEEMED VIABLE COURSE OF ACTION.

(D) THIS REMAINS IEG'S ATTITUDE. TACTICALLY, AT THIS JUNCTURE, UPCOMING OAU MOGADISCIO SUMMIT MIGHT AFFORT ELF GOOD POLITICAL NEGOTIATION PERFORCE LIKELY PROVE LENGTHY GIVEN ANTICIPATED ELF ATTEMPTS MAKE MOST OF OPPORTUNITY. FURTHER, RAINY SEASON IS UPON US WITH UNHEALTHY CONDITIONS THIS ENTAILS FOR CAPTIVES.

4. I THEN INFORMED FONMIN OF RECEIPT ELF LETTER CONTAINED REF (ADDIS 6158) AND PASSED OUT COPIES. I TOLD PARTICIPANTS THAT PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE DATED MAY 12 AND FORWARDED UNDER COVER THIS LETTER MARKED BY ASSERTION THAT CAPTIVES IN GOOD HEALTH AND HOPED FOR EARLY RELEASE. I TOLD FONMIN THAT A/CONGEN ASMARA HAD TURNED OVER TO ETHIOPIAN AUTHORITIES ELF LETTER ADDRESSED TO IEG WHICH RECEIVED CONCURRENTLY. (I DID NOT DISCLOSE USG KNOWLEDGE OF CONTENTS, NEEDLESS TO SAY.)

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5. I TOLD FONMIN THAT CORRESPONDENCE FROM CAPTIVES ACCOMPANYING ELF LETTER TO TENNECO COMPELLED US ATTACH IMPORTANCE TO CONTENTS THAT LETTER AND PARTICULARLY INSISTENCE ON MORGHANI AS CHANNEL. I SAID WE CONTINUED HAVE RESERVATIONS ON USE THIS CHANNEL. WE AWARE THAT MISSIONARIES IN ERITREA BECOMING ACTIVE THROUGH THEIR OWN CONTACTS IN SEEKING RELEASE OF CAPTIVES. WE DO NOT WANT HAVE MORGHANI INTERFERE WITH

THEIR EFFORTS.

6. HOWEVER, SITUATION MAY EVOLVE IN FEW DAYS AND WE MAY, THEREAFTER, REACH CONCLUSION THAT ANOTHER ATTEMPT THROUGH MORGHANI IS BEST ALTERNATIVE AVAILABLE TO US. IN PREPARATION FOR THIS CONTINGENCY, WE WOULD FIND IT USEFUL IF MR. PEAK OF EMBASSY MIGHT PUT LIST OF QUESTIONS TO MORGHANI IN PRESENCE COL. SOLOMON OF IEG SECURITY SERVICE. QUESTIONS WOULD DEAL WITH MORGHANI'S PROPOSED MODUS OPERANDI, ACCESS TO CAPTORS, ETC.

7. IN LIGHT OUTCOME THAT SESSION AND EVOLVING CIRCUMSTANCES, IF RPT IF WE REACH DECISION TRY USE MORGHANI AGAIN, FIRST TASK WOULD BE ESTABLISH AUTHENTICITY CHANNEL HE REPRESENTS. TO THAT END, WOULD IEG BE PREPARED JOIN TENNECO IN SENDING WORK TO ELF THROUGH MORGHANI SAYING PRINCIPALS PREPARED TREAT THROUGH HIM PROVIDING HE DEMONSTRATES HIS AUTHENTICITY BY RETURNING WITH ONE OF CAPTIVES?

8. FONMIN REPLIED THAT HE HAD NO PROBLEM WITH EITHER SUGGESTION. HE NOTED THAT MORGHANI IN ADDIS WHERE HE HAD BEEN BROUGHT TO GIVE TENNECO FREE HAND IN ERITREA ON PRETEXT HE (ZEWDE) WISHED CONSULT HIM. HE WOULD NOW TRY SEE HIM BEFORE DEPARTING FOR MOGADISCIO TO LAY GROUNDWORK FOR HIS POSSIBLE EMPLOYMENT. "MORGHANI MUST BE SLIPPERY FELLOW", ZEWDE SAID.

9. FONMIN THEN REITERATED THAT PRELIMINARIES NOT PROBLEM FOR IEG BUT THAT DEEPER IEG INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICAL NEGOTIATION COULD PROVE COMPLEX. "IF IT CAN BE DONE WITHOUT BRINGING IN THE POLITICAL ASPECT, SO MUCH THE BETTER. IF THERE IS NO OTHER WAY, IEG WILL OBVIOUSLY HAVE TO SEE WHAT IT CAN DO."

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10. REYNOLDS THEN EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR PROBLEMS TO WHICH FONMIN HAD ADVERTED. HE THOUGHT THAT CONCURRENT NEGOTIATIONS TENNECO/ELF AND IEG/ELF LIKELY PROVE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE AND OPINED THAT IF IT EVENTUALLY DECIDED USE MORGHANI IT PROBABLY PREFERABLE HAVE LATTER OPERATE IN BEHALF OF TENNECO RATHER THAN IEG. FONMIN NODDED.

11. IT WAS LEFT THAT FONMIN WOULD INSTRUCT ACTING MININT DEMISSIE TO STAND IN FOR HIM ON THIS MATTER IN HIS (ZEWDE'S) ABSENCE AND THAT PARTICIPANTS COULD MEET WITH DEMISSIE JUNE 5 TO REVIEW BIDDING.

12. COMMENT: DEPARTMENT WILL NOTE THAT FONMIN'S EXPLANATION IEG CONCERNS DOVETAILS CLOSELY WITH ASSESSMENTS SUBMITTED ADDIS 5576 AND ASMARA 368.

13. FOR ATHENS. PLEASE INFORM FREEMAN OF ABOVE.  
WYMAN

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## Message Attributes

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